

Brief Screening Guide for Risky Alcohol and Drug Use

Once systems are in place for brief interventions, it is strongly recommended to screen all primary care patients 18 years or older once a year for unhealthy alcohol and drug use with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) single-item alcohol use screen (NIAAA-1) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) single-item drug use screen (NIDA-1).

For females, “How many times in the past year have you had four or more drinks in a day?”

For males, “How many times in the past year have you had five or more drinks in a day?”

- **Never**
- **Less than once a month**
- **One to three times per month**
- **One to three times per week**
- **More than three times per week**

How many times in the past year have you used an illegal drug or used a prescription medication for non-medical reasons?

- **Never**
- **Less than once a month**
- **One to three times per month**
- **One to three times per week**
- **More than three times per week**

Responding to Screens:

If the screens are positive (NIDA-1 any response other than “Never,” or NIAAA-1 any response other than “Never”), then the 10-item Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10),¹ and/or Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT) should be administered, respectively.

Tips for Administering Screens:

1. If possible, it is recommended to incorporate the screening questions into existing forms and questionnaires that ask about lifestyle behaviors.
2. If there are no existing forms that these questions can be incorporated into, it is

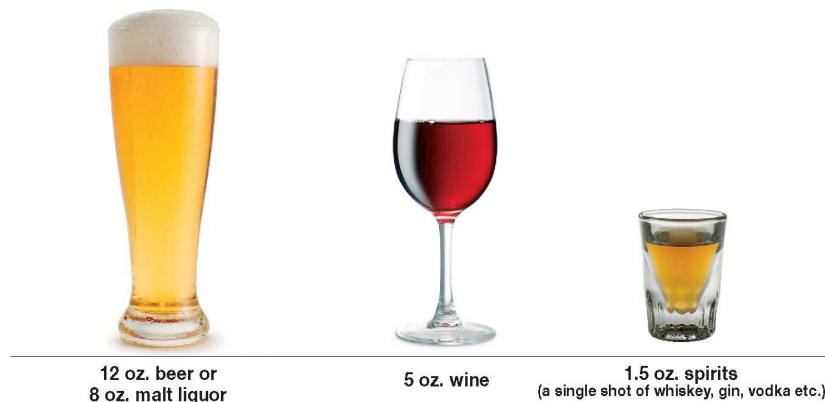
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often useful to add screening questions for other lifestyle behaviors into the form with the screening questions. Such lifestyle areas could include: tobacco use, nutrition, physical activity, etc.

3. Some examples of sentences to help introduce the questions are provided below for consideration:

- *It is your decision whether or not you provide us with this information.*
- *This information helps us give you the best possible care.*
- *Your responses to these questions will help us do the best possible job to keep you healthy.*
- *The information you share with use will not be given to anyone else without your permission.*

4. For the NIAAA-1 questionnaire, it is necessary to define what is considered a drink. It is helpful to offer this written explanation, *“For this question, a drink means one (12 ounce) can or bottle of beer, one glass of wine, one wine cooler, or a 1.5 oz. of hard liquor.”* It is also often helpful to include a visual of a “standard drink.”



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